

Semler's hot streak stopped by torn ACL

Written by Jim Ecker

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Kasey Semler was enjoying one of the best games of his life last Saturday for the Kirkwood Eagles against DMACC.

He had scored a career-high 27 points and the Eagles were a few minutes away from securing a 96-86 victory when he felt a sharp pain in his left knee.

"It gave out," he said Wednesday night. "It popped."

That popping sound was the ACL in his knee.

"I knew it was bad," he said. "I didn't want to think like that, so I was hoping for a sprain. Anything but an ACL."

He had an MRI on the knee Monday. A few hours later, he received the dreaded news. He'd torn the ACL and his season was over.

Semler, a 6-foot-1 sophomore from Marion High School, had to sit and watch Wednesday night as Kirkwood defeated NIACC in overtime, 89-83, in the opening round of the Region XI tournament at Johnson Hall.

"I realize I just have to be there for my team, just like they've always supported me," he said. "I'm going to do everything I can to help us keep going."

Kirkwood will host Ellsworth in the semifinals Friday at 7 p.m.

Semler missed six games in December and January with a broken hand, but was one of the

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hottest players in the ICCAC the past five weeks. He averaged 18.7 points and shot 50.1 percent on 3-pointers since Feb. 1, raising his overall scoring mark to a team-best 11.6 points per game.

Semler is scheduled to have surgery on Thursday. He's been told he could be playing again in six to eight months, which means he might be ready for the 2013-14 campaign at his next school.

Semler has several offers from four-year colleges but has not made a commitment. The offers still stand, despite the injury.

"There have been four or five schools that have contacted me and said we're not changing our plans for you," he said. "I really appreciate that."